



## **AMERICAN CITIZEN NEWS**

Second Quarter 2007

### **American Citizens Service Consolidation**

**Happy 4th of July**

As of 1 July 2007, the U.S. Mission in Germany is centralizing consular resources at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, and the Consulates in Frankfurt and Munich. This consolidation is part of a global effort to bring about greater efficiencies in how the U.S. Government conducts its diplomatic engagement overseas, but will not lessen the importance of the Consulates' other operations in Hamburg or Düsseldorf.

The American Citizen Services (ACS) staff in Berlin will now provide support to American Citizens living in Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Bremen and Niedersachsen. Americans living in North-Rhein Westphalia will be served by the ACS staff in the Frankfurt Consulate. The staff at both the Hamburg and Düsseldorf Consulates will continue to respond to emergencies involving American citizens. However, routine services requiring a personal visit must now be done at the designated Consulate. The Consulate in Leipzig and the Consulate Agent in Bremen will continue to offer limited routine services for Americans in their districts.

Given advances in technology, more of our services are available to U.S. citizens via the internet. In most cases, it's no longer necessary to visit a consular section for routine assistance. For example, U.S. citizen residents and visitors can fill out and print passport applications online, and can find all the information they need concerning voter registration and absentee ballots on their state of residence homepage. Since the U.S. and Germany are both signatories to the Hague Legalization Convention, it's not necessary for an American consular officer to notarize documents for use in the U.S. Documents may instead be legalized by German authorities, who will affix a Hague "Apostille" certificate.

The Embassy and all the Consulates in Germany have slightly different customer service hours. We are closed on U.S. and some German holidays. Please consult the U.S. Citizens Services page on our website, [www.usembassy.de](http://www.usembassy.de) for the hours of the Embassy or Consulate you wish to visit.

### **Be Alert! Increased Security Posture Still in Effect**

The Warden Message that was released on 10 April 2007 concerning U.S. Mission Germany's heightened security posture is still in force. The text of the message is reprinted here for your convenience:

*U.S. diplomatic and consular facilities in Germany are increasing their security posture. We are taking these steps in response to a heightened threat situation.*

*The U.S. Embassy encourages Americans in Germany to increase their vigilance and take appropriate steps to bolster their own personal security.*

*The Department of State's April 10, 2007, "Worldwide Caution" Public Announcement, which can be found on the Internet at [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1161.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html) provides additional information on potential threats to U.S. citizens overseas, along with advice on how to reduce your vulnerability to such threats. Additional general information on residing and traveling abroad, including the latest Consular Information Sheet for Germany, may be found on-line at <http://travel.state.gov>.*

*Contact information for the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, and Consulates in Frankfurt, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Munich and Leipzig may be found on the Mission Germany: [http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/citizen\\_services.html](http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/citizen_services.html)*

### **A NOTE TO OUR VISITORS**

If you visit the Embassy in Berlin or one of the Consulates, make sure you arrive early to process through security; it is somewhat slower because of the extra measures we have in place.

Please remember, you cannot bring cell phones, lap top computers, MP3 players or other electronic devices into the Embassy or any of the Consulates. Large, bulky items, like luggage, are also prohibited.



## **Children's Resources**

We're sure you're aware of the wealth of resources available to you at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) to help keep you and your family prepared for all your travels, but did you know the State Department's main web site, [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov), also has a variety of resources for your children? Visit the Youth and Education section of the site at <http://www.state.gov/youthandeducation>. You'll find games and puzzles devoted to American history and world geography for children in grades K-6. Older students can learn about the Cuban Missile Crisis, the end of the Cold War, and other major events in the Parents and Educators section. Parents can find information on international schools from Pakistan to Peru under the Office of Overseas Schools tab that covers everything from the curriculum to enrollment and tuition. And, of course, for prospective Diplomats, there's lots of information on life as a U.S. Diplomat!

## Celebrate Independence Day!

According to John Adams, the second President of the United States, Independence Day is...

“...the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, .... It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more.”



Living in Germany makes it challenging to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July as President Adams decreed, but we can take time to remember the history of the Declaration of Independence and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Just how well do you remember the details of that momentous day in our history? Take the following quiz to find out!

1. The “Committee of Five” was the group of men appointed to present to the world the “colonies’ case for independence.” Who were the five men?
2. How many of the 13 colonies ratified the Declaration of Independence? How many voted no? How many abstained?
3. How many people signed the Declaration of Independence?
4. How many of them actually signed it on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1776?
5. Which two were also elected president?
6. Which Continental Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence?
7. What treaty concluded the War of Independence?
8. Which British king signed the treaty?
9. Which two signers died within hours of each other, on the same day?
10. Who was the oldest person to sign the Declaration?



*Happy 4th of July*

**Ready to check your answers?**

[http://frankfurt.usconsulate.gov/frankfurt/img/assets/9076/Independence\\_Day\\_Trivia\\_Answers.pdf](http://frankfurt.usconsulate.gov/frankfurt/img/assets/9076/Independence_Day_Trivia_Answers.pdf)

## Travel Tips

With the summer travel season for expatriates getting into full swing, we'd like to offer the following suggestions to help make your trip a pleasant one.

**Passports:** Check those expiration dates! Every day, at Consulates around the world, American citizens can be found, frantically trying to get new passports for their children. The reason: They forgot that unlike adult passports which are valid for ten years, children's passports expire after five years. And, also unlike adult passports, children's passports cannot be renewed by mail; they must be renewed in person at the Embassy or one of the Consulates. Both parents must provide consent for children under 14. From Germany, in the peak season, processing time from the day of your visit to the day you can expect to receive the passport in the mail is approximately 4 weeks. Visit Mission Germany's website, at [www.usembassy.de](http://www.usembassy.de), and click on U.S. Citizen Services for specific details.

**International Travel:** The State Department maintains a wealth of information on every country in the world at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). Under the International Travel tab at [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html), you can find visa requirements, security cautions, health risks, etc. Above all, it tells you how to register your trip in the country you're visiting. In these turbulent times, it's always a good idea to let the American Embassy staff know who's in their district.

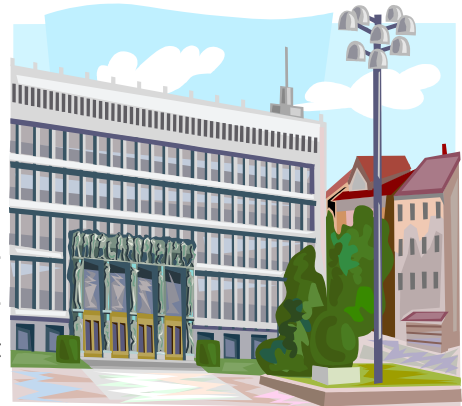


**Packing:** The carry-on restrictions the TSA instituted last year are still in force for travel to and from the U.S. The European Union has adopted almost identical requirements for liquids carried onto any aircraft. Essentially, all liquids or creams must be packed in bottles or containers that hold less than 3oz/100mls. (Half-empty large bottles can't be used.) All the bottles must fit in a single, clear, resealable plastic bag. While some airports do provide these bags, for stress-free travel, we recommend you bring your own. TSA's website, [www.tsa.gov/travelers](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers) has all the details for the U.S. requirements. Information about the EU's rules can be found on the EU's website at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/363&format=PDF&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**Visas:** For those of you with non-U.S. Citizen family members, or friends who are interested in traveling to the United States, go to Mission Germany's web site, [www.usembassy.de](http://www.usembassy.de) to find out who is eligible to fly to the U.S. under the visa waiver program, what kind of non-immigrant visas are required for business or educational travel, how to apply for a visa, and the documents you'll need for the specific visa you require. All visa applicants require an appointment, and a completed application. All of this can now be done on-line through the website — you can even make the interview appointment online at [http://www.usvisa-germany.com/germany/index.jsp?locale=de\\_DE](http://www.usvisa-germany.com/germany/index.jsp?locale=de_DE). **Important Note:** German citizens' passports must be machine readable, or have a visa. Citizens with temporary (green) passports must also have a visa. Other rules concerning the validity of German passports can also be found on the web site.

## CONSULS AT YOUR SERVICE

Foreign Service Officers or FSOs, the diplomats who staff U.S. Embassies and Consulates around the world, fulfill many functions in support of our nation. Consular service to American citizens abroad is at the top of our priority list. It is a function that consular officers, one part of our diplomatic staff, have fulfilled since the earliest days of our Republic. Never has this support been more valuable or timely than in today's unpredictable world.



One of our most useful services is our Consular Information Sheets, available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for every country in the world. These up-to-date reports provide realistic travel information on topics ranging from safety and security to guidance on local visa requirements. On the same website, you can also register your travel plans or your overseas address, so we can reach you in case of an emergency. In drastic circumstances, we assist Americans to safely depart conflict zones or natural disasters. More often, we help families locate loved ones in the event of an emergency at home.

In Germany, routine services include assisting destitute travelers and victims of crime, visiting Americans who have been arrested, checking on the welfare of children involved in child custody disputes, and aiding next of kin when an American citizen has died overseas, including issuing official reports of death. On a daily basis, we document American citizenship by issuing passports and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, we notarize documents for use in the United States, and we help people register to vote. Our immigrant visa section assists Americans who wish to bring their foreign-born spouse or other family members to the U.S. And our Federal Benefits unit provides overseas residents with assistance on Social Security and Veterans Administration matters.



Consuls cannot overrule local authorities, but we can act as resources and advocates for American citizens, ensuring that our nationals are treated fairly and are not discriminated against because of their citizenship. The most satisfying aspect of consular service is serving you, our fellow citizens, as you navigate the globe. We enjoy our work and we look forward to doing our best for you.